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HB 5473: An Act Concerning Actions to Recover Damages for the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Assault of a Minor

Dear Chairman Lawlor, Chairman McDonald and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this letter as my testimony bearing on the Dr. Reardon legislation and extending the statute of limitations.

I am currently 57 years old, and when I was 10, give or take a few months, I was hospitalized at Saint Francis Hospital for a slipped disk in my mid-back. That required me to be in traction for several days. One night Dr. Reardon came to my bedside and unhooked the sling from under my chin, told me to come with him, led me down the hall, past the nurses' station, on to an elevator, and to another floor, where he had a photography studio set up. It had a large camera on a tripod, several lights on stands, the telescoping reflector to reflect light, and a table.

He had me get on the table, and for 15-20 minutes, very approximate, he took photos of me in the nude. He had me assume many positions, and photographed them all. The only time he touched me was to help me undress and to position my body once or twice.

After this he had me get dressed, took me back the way we had come, and had me get back in bed.

I'm wondering if my pictures were among the ones found at his home. I don't want to look at any of them to find out.

Believe me when I tell you that this event is burned into my memory. Of course I knew something was weird and wrong at the time, but as a kid you don't feel empowered to question the orders of a doctor, and in the hospital, a "safe" environment, I never thought I'd be threatened or molested in any way.

I don't believe for a minute that Saint Francis personnel were unaware of what Dr. Reardon was up to. He came onto the ward and took one of their patients away, and he was not treating me for anything. He walked past nurses with me in tow, no questions asked. He had a room in the hospital set up as a photo studio, and how can one hide that?

What I believe is that the staff and other doctors had a sneaking suspicion about what was going on for years, and chose to turn a blind eye. Reardon was not invisible, kids like me were not invisible; he did this in front of a lot of people for a lot of years.

I'm asking that you extend the statute to cover folks like me. Until this thing hit the press I never knew who perpetrated this offense, and the sense of having done something wrong myself, which kids tend to get even if they were not at fault, prevented me from telling anyone about this sad episode.

Regards,

John Brandon.